

I. Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces without prejudice all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications structure for communicating between ~~at least one~~ a network node and at least two subscriber stations through a multiplexed link, said structure comprising:

a plurality of dedicated channels, each dedicated channel having allocated to it a portion of the transmission capacity of said link to provide communication between said network node and one of said at least two subscriber stations; and

a shared downlink channel having allocated to it a portion of the transmission capacity of said link and wherein said shared downlink channel is operable to transmit frames of packets from said network node to said at least two subscriber stations, at least some such frames including packets of data addressed to different ones of said at least two subscriber stations.

2. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 1 wherein said portion of the transmission capacity of said link allocated to said shared downlink channel is fixed.

3. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 1 wherein said structure includes a preselected minimum number of said dedicated channels and said portion of the transmission capacity of said link allocated to said shared downlink channel comprises the balance of said transmission capacity which is not occupied by said preselected number of said dedicated channels.
4. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 1 including at least two shared downlink channels, each shared downlink channel being operable to transmit frames of packets from said network node to said at least two subscriber stations.
5. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 4 wherein each of said at least two shared downlink channels is operable to transmit said frames of packets to different ones of said at least two subscriber stations.
6. (Currently Amended) The structure of claim 4 wherein said balance of said transmission capacity is allocated unequally to each of said at least two shared downlink channels.
7. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 3 wherein additional dedicated channels are created, as needed, by reallocating necessary transmission capacity of said link from at least one shared downlink channels

channel to such additional dedicated channels.

8. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 7 wherein said at least one shared downlink channel has a preselected minimum transmission capacity and reallocation of transmission capacity from said at least one shared downlink channel to said additional dedicated channels ceases before said transmission capacity allocated to said shared downlink channels falls below said minimum transmission capacity.

9. (Currently Amended) The structure according to claim 1 wherein data for a subscriber station is transmitted from said network node via a combination of a dedicated channel and said shared downlink channel, said dedicated channel providing a first data transmission rate and said shared downlink channel providing an additional transmission rate, as needed, to accommodate transmission bursts in excess of said first data transmission rate.

10. (Original) The structure of claim 1 wherein at least one of said plurality of dedicated channels has a different amount of said transmission capacity allocated to it than does another of said plurality of dedicated channels.

11. (Original) The structure of claim 1 wherein said link is a radio link.

12. (Original) The structure of claim 11 wherein said radio link employs CDMA as a multiplexing technique.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of transmitting data from a network node to a plurality of subscriber stations over a multiplexed link, comprising the steps of:

(i) determining the requirements for a first data transmission intended for a subscriber station;

(ii) selecting the use of a dedicated channel or a shared downlink channel to effect said first data transmission in accordance with said determined requirements; and

(iii) if a dedicated channel is selected, obtaining a dedicated channel when available and transmitting said first data transmission thereon and if a shared downlink channel is selected, transmitting said first data transmission on said shared downlink channel in the form of data packets addressed to said subscriber station, said data packets assembled into frames, at least some such frames including packets of data addressed to different ones of said subscriber stations.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the determination in step (i) is made in consideration of the QoS requirements of said first data transmission.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the determination in step (i) is made in consideration of the type of data to be transmitted.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein, if a dedicated channel is selected and no such dedicated channel is available, said first data transmission is transmitted on said shared downlink channel.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 where in step (ii), both a dedicated channel and a shared downlink channel are selected, an amount of said first data transmission corresponding to the transmission capacity of said dedicated channel being sent thereon and the balance of said first data transmission being sent on said shared downlink channel.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of managing a transmission structure for transmitting data from a network node to a plurality of subscriber stations over a multiplexed link, comprising the steps of:

(i) allocating a portion of the bandwidth of said multiplexed link to create a number of dedicated channels, each of which can be assigned to a different one of said subscriber stations;

(ii) allocating a portion of the remaining bandwidth of said multiplexed link to a shared downlink channel which can communicate with a plurality of said subscriber stations, data transmission on said shared downlink channel in the form of data packets assembled into frames, at least some such frames including packets of data addressed to different ones of said subscriber stations;

(iii) monitoring the requirements for dedicated channels in said structure

and reallocating bandwidth of said multiplexed link between said shared downlink channel and said dedicated channels to create or remove dedicated channels as required.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein said structure includes a preselected minimum number of dedicated channels and, in step (iii), no dedicated channels are removed when said number of dedicated channels is equal to said preselected minimum number.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein said structure includes a preselected minimum portion of bandwidth allocated to said shared downlink channel and, in step (iii), no dedicated channels are created which would otherwise reduce the bandwidth allocated to said shared downlink channel below said minimum portion of bandwidth.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein said structure includes a preselected minimum number of dedicated channels and a preselected minimum portion of bandwidth allocated to said shared downlink channel and, in step (iii), no dedicated channels are created which would otherwise reduce the bandwidth allocated to said shared downlink channel below said minimum portion of bandwidth and no dedicated channels are removed when said number of dedicated channels is equal to said preselected minimum number.